



University of Missouri System

COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS

University of Missouri Torch Award winners recognized today, Nov. 14

COLUMBIA, Mo. – During today’s Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises Recognition and Graduation, Torch Awards were given to graduating mentees as well as their mentors and team leaders. The following is a list of those who were honored.

Advocacy-Mentoring Program

Team 1

- University team leader: **John Neal**, associate director of Campus Facilities-Construction (University of Missouri-Columbia)
- Mentee: **Kayla Dennis**, president of Ability Building and Restoration, St. Louis
- Mentor: **Brian Paluch**, chief financial officer, Paric Corporation, St. Louis

Team 2

- University team leader: **Ted Ruth**, director of Design & Construction (Missouri University of Science and Technology)
- Mentee: **Gayle Lackey**, president of Lackey Sheet Metal, St. Louis
- Mentor: **Adam Knoebel**, vice president of operations, McCarthy Building Companies, St. Louis

Team 3

- University team leader: **Greg Silkman**, manager of Facilities Planning & Construction, University of Missouri-Kansas City
- Mentee: **Ike Nwabuonwu**, chairman and CEO of Alpha Energy & Electric, Kansas City
- Mentor: **Radd Way**, executive vice president of Weitz Co., Kansas

Team 4

- Mentee: **Eric Bailey**, president of EMED Medical, St. Louis
- Mentor: **Earl Kennedy**, area director of Heartland Region, Owens & Minor, St. Louis

Team 5

- Mentee: **Merrill Nelson**, president of TMN Staffing, St. Louis
- Mentor: **Darlene Fuller**, senior director of supplier diversity, Sodexo, Columbia, Maryland

For more information about the UM System’s Minority Business Development Program, please visit www.umsystem.edu/minbusdev.